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Multimodality of Cultural Content in ELT Materials for Young Learners

Abstract

Cultural content is incorporated into EL materials to enrich linguistic content. The paper focuses on English materials as cultural artefacts analyzed in terms of multimodality. The aim is to identify the most important multimodal aspects of cultural content offered in English course books for early language education. Following the multimodal discourse analysis, the image–language relations presented in the culture sections are examined. The paper seeks to address two following questions: What is the multimodality of cultural content in English course books for young learners? What are the image-language relations involved in the construction of cultural content? The project involves an analysis of nine course books currently used in teaching English to young learners in Polish primary schools. The data will be collected during the evaluation studies, which here are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study is based on a set of universal, content-specific, multimodal, and intermodal criteria. It is hoped that the results from the research project will enrich the process of ELT materials design in terms of multimodality. They will support the need for developing multimodal (visual) literacy through multicultural education in early language education.

Keywords: multimodality, ELT materials, cultural content, visual literacy, young learners

Introduction

There is an increasing number of multilingual and multicultural children with various skills and needs in Europe and all over the world. In this article the term young learners (YL) refers to children whose age ranges between six and eight. They experience cultural diversity and live in different language backgrounds as a result of globalization, emigration, mobility, and tourism. Early language education is widely supported in Europe, among others due to

its positive effect on children's holistic development, personal skills, positive attitudes to other languages and cultures (cf. Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002, pp. 5, 54). Educational policies with the focus on multicultural and multilingual elements tend to celebrate cultural and linguistic differences in a positive way. All children use English course books that include cultural content. They participate in the intercultural process from the very beginning, as any language learning requires social interaction, comparing, and connecting cultures (Lee-McKay, 2002, p. 85; Rivers, 2010, pp. 21–24). It is well known that language is a part of culture and culture is encoded in the language itself (Kramsch, 1998, p. 3). Then, an integrated approach to teaching language and culture dominates in the global course books (Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 444–448) through which YL are exposed to the multimodal paper texts and thus develop multimodal communicative competence. They are expected to comprehend, interpret, and design visual elements as the active viewers (Royce, 2002, pp. 191–205). The texts in English course books are semiotic resources composed of images, language, sounds, and music (Kawka, 2016, p. 294). However, too little attention has been paid to the multimodality of ELT (English language teaching) materials, not to mention the interplay between verbal and non-verbal semiotics in English course books for children. which has led to pursue this research project.

Literature Review

ELT materials produced commercially are cultural artefacts with a variety of roles in education. They can be informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting, and exploratory in nature. Above all they present the meaning of English and the world of English for learners (Tomlinson, after Gray, 2013, pp. 2–16). ELT materials are linked to the social and historical developments influenced by the context in which they occur. They are “rooted in particular time and culture” (Littlejohn, 2012, p. 283). It is claimed that currently they reflect McDonalidization and globalization in their design.¹ ELT materials are

¹ A considerable amount of literature has been published on ELT materials designed for the local and global markets. Since the 1980s they have included more relevant and familiar concepts to learners' life. ELT materials produced in the UK or the USA are the ambassadors of Anglo-Saxon culture, being criticized for presenting stereotypical representations of others and outdated content (Gray, 2000, p. 274; Romanowski, 2005, pp. 48–53). Namely, they advocate a western, cosmopolitan and middle-class lifestyle (Lee-McKay, 2002, p. 95; Littlejohn, 2011, pp. 211–214; Byram & Masuhara, 2013, p. 145; Harwood, 2014, pp. 4–5; Gray & Block, 2014, pp. 45–71). Although ELT materials are criticized for not reflecting the latest research into language acquisition or cultural realities, still they constitute the basic resource center for

standardized sources with guides, proper selection, and sequence of the content, including the cultural content (Littlejohn, 2012, pp. 290–293; Hadley, 2014, pp. 205–238).

In recent years, there have been three major categories of educational materials. The first category involves course books (i.e., textbooks available with teacher's book, student's book, tests, video materials, CALL materials) produced by publishers and educating institutions. The second category includes profit-making materials such as dictionaries, grammar books, readers, and other practice materials. The third category includes teacher-prepared materials such as authentic print materials, authentic recordings (e.g., songs, Internet resources), worksheets, and teacher-developed materials (e.g., DIY), games, realia, and representations (e.g., photos and drawings) (McGrath, 2013, pp. 2–3). In this paper the term ELT materials refers to English course books produced commercially for Polish YL and accepted by Polish Ministry of Education.

ELT resources “mirror” cultural values in more or less considerable degree, influencing learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the target language culture (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 90; Krawiec, 2012, pp. 105–116). The relations between culturally familiar and less familiar concepts are developed by the authors, who use comparisons for cross-cultural comprehension or use universal concepts for the interpretation of concepts. The cultural content in the materials for YL influences their holistic development (cognitive, mental, individual, social, and emotional spheres) and the amount of English they will remember as well as their behavior and interactions, willingness to communicate, motivation, and perception about themselves (Gerngross & Puchta, 2000, pp. 12–13; Harwood, 2014, pp. 4–5). Course books are the initial source of knowledge for the beginners where elements of culture are usually presented in the form of specific “culture pages,” “culture corners” or “culture reviews” (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002, p. 148). The general tendency is to develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which in the context of YL, is described as discovery-based learning. YL are supported to discover culture for themselves, following “ethnographic approach” (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002, pp. 146–148; Vickov, 2007, pp. 105–120; Rivers, 2010, pp. 21–24).

The latest Polish and international ELT materials promote ICC and include aspects of intercultural teaching rather than British studies only. This type of teaching is more experiential in nature. The process leads to the progress in skills of observation, empathy for others, adaptation skills in the intercultural situations, fostering of learners' cultural identity (Bolt, 2001, p. 101; Marczak, 2012, pp. 15–16; Byram Masuhara, 2013, pp. 144–147). The idea is to teach cross-cultural sensitivity as culture is defined as “the fifth language skill” in

both teachers and learners including the multilingual ones (Littlejohn, 2011: 181; Nunan, 2011, pp. 204–205; Tomlinson, 2013a, pp. 15–18, McGrath, 2013, pp. 5–17).

addition to the receptive and productive skills (cf. Tomalin, 2008, pp. 1–2). The aim is to develop critical cultural awareness including meta-cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, awareness of their own cultural identity as well as develop empathy and tolerance towards others, supporting curiosity and critical thinking (Lee-McKay, 2002, pp. 83–84; Jaroszewska, 2007, pp. 319–322; Sobkowiak, 2008, pp. 53–54; Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 443–459).

There are always questions associated with culture in ELT materials. Whose culture should be taught? What is the best amount of culture to be taught? What level learners should be exposed to cultural content? Traditionally, three dimensions can be identified in English materials concerning cultural content,² namely, a focus on the learners' own culture, the target language culture of the countries where English is spoken as the first language and, finally, the international culture where English is used as a lingua franca (Cortazzi & Jim, 1999, p. 204; Lee-McKay, 2002, pp. 81–88; McGrath, 2013, p. 198).

Young learners acquire the target language and culture from ELT materials, which promote both visible and invisible aspects of culture. The visible aspects ("the top of the iceberg") are easy to explain and clear to all learners, for example, traditions and customs such as Christmas and cuisine. The invisible aspects of culture ("the bottom of the iceberg," including value systems, beliefs, and socio-cultural norms, are difficult to explain and usually are not examined intellectually in a classroom³ (Hinkel, 2001, pp. 443–458; Peterson, 2004, pp. 385–400). On the other hand, there are questions related to meaning and values promoted by the cultural content. As far as design of ELT materials is concerned, questions may refer to the manner of presenting cultural content

² Cultural components in ELT materials may be analyzed in various scope and with different focus and approach (McGrath, 2013, pp. 207–208). They are generally evaluated with checklists or other inventories. Namely, the checklist for social and cultural values was offered by Cunningsworth (1995, pp. 91–92). The inventory of cultural components based on the Likert scale was offered by Razi (2012, pp. 168–186). The guidelines needed for the evaluation of ELT resources of the cultural content may include such factors as learners' needs, hidden curriculum, stereotypes, and generalizations (Kramsch, 1998, p. 131; Kilickaya, 2004, pp. 4–6). Evaluation of ELT materials with a focus on the cultural content is linked with such factors as knowledge of oneself and others, awareness of oneself and others, attitudes towards oneself and others, skills needed for exploring, interpreting culture and interacting with others (Byram & Masuhara, 2013, pp. 150–154). These factors are also important for understanding the cultural content in illustrations (Davies, 2013, pp. 1–10).

³ The subject literature shows that a limited coverage of art and literature ("C" culture) is found in the latest ELT materials. In the same way, multicultural aspects are enclosed infrequently (Szymańska-Czaplak, 2009, pp. 229–230). Richness and variety within cultures should be balanced as "that which is true of the whole is not necessarily true of the parts" (Guest, 2002, p. 156). The role of cultural content seems to involve, among others, the presentation of diversity that exists within any culture (Lee-McKay, 2002, p. 94). The cultural content which supports the national stereotypes should be avoided as the best is the content with multicultural aspects and illustrations of authentic cultural traditions (Jaroszewska, 2009, pp. 160–178).

in audio-visual texts and procedures offered there for teaching culture (Clouet, 2006, p. 53; Tomalin, 2008, pp. 1–2). What modes are used in the construction of the cultural content? What mode carries the most cultural information load? What mode supports the development of intercultural communication and multimodal (visual) literacy? These are a few questions related to multimodal aspects of ELT materials.

Multimodality has been advocated by multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) and described as multimodal semiotics (O'Halloran, 2011, p. 120). It is a relatively new field of scientific interest which focuses on the combination of speaking, writing, visualization, and music in the construction of meaning (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 185). Apart from language MDA advocates various sign systems that are also the sources of meaning, such as image, color, sound, music, and gesture. These semantic resources are defined as modes and constitute the central area in MDA. Core modes are various sensing channels on which our opinions are formed about the audio-visual texts. The resources (modes) integrate across modalities (senses) in the multimodal texts such as the paper ELT materials. Multimodality is based on the information exchange realized by three or more of these sensing channels involved in communication.

Kress stresses that each mode has a function. A mode of image presents a picture that can be read faster than words. A mode of writing describes everything that is difficult to illustrate while a mode of color underlines and frames the messages (Kress, 2010, pp. 1–8, 79). The foundations of multimodality were provided in a functional semiotic theory on reading images and visuals developed by Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in the 1980s and 1990s. The theory had originated from Michael Halliday's social semiotic approach to language. Modes are socially shaped and culturally developed semiotic resources for making meaning used in our representation, recognition, and communication (Kress, 2010, p. 79). They have several implications for design and use of the cultural content in ELT materials. The most interesting seems to be the intersemiotic relation between verbal and visual content. English course books can be perceived as the visual and auditory semiotic resources with the complementary relations between verbal and visual content. Illustrations, pictures, and images do not perform only a decorative function as they construct meaning through the representation of culture (Hurst, 2014, p. 21).

The core modes (images, language, sounds, and music) and their medial variants are deeply involved in our perception and communication of messages (Stöckl, 2004, p. 14; Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 194). The core mode of language is realized through speech (para-verbal-means), state writing and animated writing, which is not considered in this paper (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, pp. 204–199). The core mode of image can be realized through static (still) and dynamic

(moving) medial variants. For this paper, only the static variants are accepted, such as size and composition of the visual content (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 214). The mode of sound and music, which are vital for the acquisition of all verbal languages, can be realized through auditory and visual media. They are designed in the form of the recorded speech, effects, chants, songs as the soundtracks accompanying the respective texts or images. The printed or electronic spectrograms are not usually included in ELT materials and are not considered in this paper. The core mode of music acoustically is realized through the music recorded as a complement to the semantic input of speech involving the song lyrics (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, pp. 204–209). Similarly, the core mode of image and language can be examined in more than one medial variant.

Visual elements are presently more and more effective for many purposes. It is estimated that 87% of information enters our brain by eyes, only 9% by ears and 4% by other senses. It is even stated that “modern forms of understanding the world depend on a scopic regime that equates seeing with knowledge” (Rose, 2012, p. 3). Similarly, the role of colors is stressed. Although 12 colors are commonly used a modern dictionary of colors in Europe includes 5,000 of them (Gage, 2010, p. 263). The visuals represent and interpret different cultures and languages in a range of colors.

The visual elements in ELT materials constitute the significant factor. They transmit cultural meanings, stimulate children’s cognitive development and visual perception. In the process of teaching YL, illustrations provide a framework for understanding English (Wright, 1989, p. 2) and “offer a lifebelt in the sea of language” (Vida, 2010, p. 15). It is stated that “seeing comes before words” as children first observe and recognize before they start speaking (Rose, 2012, p. 3; Tomlinson, 2013a, p. 13). The visuals arouse YLs’ emotions and support their understanding of characters’ emotions (Nielsen-Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, pp. 764–765). It is proved that YL pay attention initially to the content of photographs in comparison with older children, who focus more on the style and composition of illustrations (Sharples, after Banks, 2009, p. 25). The visuals gain children’s attention, add variety to the process of English learning and provide support (Petty, 2009, pp. 375–407).

The visual elements serve as the supporting items to the linguistic content or as the stimulating items for discussions (Wright, 1989, pp. 7–8; Krawiec, 2012, p. 112) although about 50% of the pictures in ELT course books are used for decorative purposes⁴ only (Hill, 2013, p. 163). The graphic quality of teaching materials has improved and currently they are “full of stylish color drawings and state-of-the-art photographs” (Hill, 2013, p. 157). Both the context visu-

⁴ Wright identifies eight categories of illustrations in ELT materials. These are pictures of objects (food, clothes, animals), people (stars and celebrities), people in action (everyday activities, travel), places (views), history (costumes), news, fantasies, maps, and other symbols (Wright, after Krawiec, 2012, p. 112).

als and content visuals are carefully designed (Guest, 2002, p. 154; Krawiec, 2012, p. 109; Basaran & Cocuk, 2013, pp. 137–139). A careful consideration should be given to explicit and implicit meanings of cultural information in the visual content⁵ which can be interpreted in many ways. Illustrations and images show but also say something to an individual learner, being able to speak their own language (Banks, 2009, pp. 185–198; Hurst, 2014, p. 25). The printed ELT course books are multimodal texts as they combine written language, illustrations, and pictures, music, spoken language, and sounds. They may also include films and online materials with the audio-visual elements and become both multimodal and multimedia ones (Perez-Gonzales, 2014, p. 187). The project focuses only on the print ELT materials among others to indicate the power of still images.

Research Project

The project involves MDA and follows Stöckl's framework for the investigation of the semiotic resources. It focuses on the examination of cultural content including four core modes such as image, language, sounds, and music (Stöckl, 2004, p. 14; Perez-Gonzalez, 2014, p. 194). It is the initial examination of multimodality in this context and will be limited to the selected medial variants. To exemplify the complex character of MDA in the print texts, the project will also focus on the image-language relations. They will be examined following Halliday's framework (2004) improved by Unsworth (2006, p. 1175) and adopted here to ELT materials for YL. The research project is based on the principles of pre-use evaluation and illuminative evaluation of ELT resources⁶ (Tomlinson, 2013b, p. 30).

⁵ There are at least three sites at which meaning of visual content can be examined. Namely, the site of production (process), the site of image/object itself (appearance) and the site of its audience (perception) (Rose, 2012, p. 346).

⁶ The pre-use evaluation refers here to suitability in terms of teaching cultural content in English course books for YL (Cunningsworth, 1995, pp. 14–15). The illuminative evaluation is applied here as it provides the interpretation of different aspects involved in the project (White, 1987, p. 216; Williams & Burden, 1994, p. 23) including the cultural content in terms of visual and verbal input (Banks, 2009, pp. 19–43).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose is to investigate the multimodality of the cultural content in English course books implemented in Polish early language education. The focus is on the image-language relations as the interplay between verbal and non-verbal semiotics in the construction of the cultural content. The idea is to find answers to the following questions:

- a) What is the multimodality of cultural content in English course books for YL?
- b) What are the image-language relations involved in the construction of cultural content?

Research Procedure

To date, various methods and procedures have been developed to measure MDA, which belongs to the qualitative research methods. As this project is the preliminary examination of the printed English course books in terms of multimodality, it follows both quantitative and qualitative approaches that are performed in two stages respectively. The first stage involves the analysis of the cultural content in English course books for YL with the focus on the core modes. The second stage involves the analysis of the image-language relations with the focus on visual-verbal cultural content presented in the same course books. The investigation is initiated by a sample selection. ELT course books selected had to fulfill four criteria modified for this evaluation as follows:

1. Universal criteria: related to early English language education (grades 1–3).
2. Content specific criteria: related to the cultural content (home and English culture limited here to celebrations and festivals) offered in ELT course books.
3. Multimodal criteria: related to the core modes of image, language, sound, and music depicting cultural content in ELT course books.
4. Intermodal criteria: related to the visual and verbal semiotics depicting the cultural content in ELT materials (Williams, 1983, pp. 251–255; Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 30–41; Unsworth, 2006, pp. 1174–1204).

For the investigation three series of the course books are selected and coded respectively: nine course books. They were published by Nowa Era, Macmillan Education, and Pearson Longman. The project is based on the data obtained during the review studies for Polish Ministry of Education. The instrument is designed and entitled: *Children's Course Book Evaluation: A Checklist for Multimodality of Cultural Content*. The first part of the checklist implemented

in the project is composed of four major sets of the following groups of questions:

1. Questions about *context* and *user definition* relate to the description of the target group (their assumed knowledge and language skills).
2. Questions about *objectives* and *scope* relate to the description of the general learning objectives, the detailed objectives and extra objectives such as multicultural education.
3. Questions about *content* and *coverage* relate to the teaching cultural content and topics promoted in ELT materials.
4. Questions about *multimodality* relate to the multimodal aspects of cultural content only and include the following sub-groups:
 - a) questions about the core mode of *image* relate to the visual presentation of the cultural content in the materials (static pictures, illustrations, drawings) and their meaning;
 - b) questions about the core mode of *language* relate to the verbal presentation of the cultural content in the materials (speech and state writing);
 - c) questions about the core mode of *sounds* relate to the verbal presentation of the cultural content in the materials (soundtracks, recordings of dialogues, phrase, and song lyrics);
 - d) questions about the core mode of *music* relate to the verbal and musical presentation of the cultural content in the materials (performed songs and chants).

The process requires a precise identification of feedback and analysis of data. The results from the evaluation are recorded and compiled on charts.

The second stage of this project focuses on the qualitative analysis of the image-language relations in terms of expansion and projection of meaning in the cultural content. The second part of the checklist includes the following questions:

1. Questions about *concurrence* related to the image-language agreement and correspondence (clarification, exposition, exemplification, and homospatiality).
2. Questions about *complementarity* related to the image-language supplement, augmentation or divergence.
3. Questions about *projection* related to the image-language presentation (verbal and mental as perception and cognition).
4. The process requires an accurate analysis of data and narrative description. The final step is to compare the answers collected in the two stages of the project.

Presentation and Interpretation of the Results

The results indicate that ELT materials for YL form a multidimensional and multimodal framework. The opening results serve as the introduction to the central data and include the following categories:

1. The target language users are young learners in the first stage of schooling in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades of primary schools.
2. The teaching objectives are listed as linguistic skills to be learnt by YL defined in the operational forms. The extra objectives include ICC, development of the positive attitude to other languages and cultures.
3. The cultural content and topics are listed under the headings of *Me and my country*, *Me and other countries*. The tendency is to introduce initially the topics linked with the nearest background of YL. These are topics linked with family and school, and only later topics related both to “home” – *My country* – and the target language culture – *Other countries*. At this stage of early language education, the most popular ones are celebrations and festivals. The detailed coverage of topics related to teaching culture in English course books for YL are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Development of ICC in the selected English course books for YL

Course book	Home (Polish) Culture	English (Anglo-Saxon) Culture
Course books for YL (1–3 grades)	Christmas Happy New Year Easter	Halloween Christmas New Year's Eve Valentine's Day Easter

The list of items in all the selected course books indicate a dominating presence of Anglo-Saxon culture aspects. The ELT materials share here three standard cultural items, which can simultaneously be related to both home and target language culture. Namely, these are Christmas, New Year's celebrations, and Easter. However, YL learn also about Halloween, Valentine's day, Mother's Day mainly in English culture context, which may differ from the Polish perspective on the matters.

The initial results collected in this project on the multimodality of ELT materials are grouped per course books, grades, core modes, and presented in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 respectively. Table 2 depicts multimodality of the selected English course books offered in the first year of primary education.

Table 2

Multimodality of the cultural content ELT course books for the 1st grade

Course books 1st grade	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech	State writing	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	Christmas	6	15	4	3	1
CB1	Easter	5	11	4	3	1
CB1	Totals	11	26	8	6	2
CB2	Christmas	19	13	–	1	–
CB2	Easter	5	18	–	1	–
CB2	Totals:	24	31	–	2	–
CB3	Halloween	3	5	–	1	–
CB3	Christmas	3	27	–	1	1
CB3	Easter	3	22	–	1	1
CB3	Totals	9	54	–	3	2

Note. CB 1 – course books from the 1st series; CB 2 – course books from the 2nd series; CB3 – course books from the 3rd series.

The core of image varies between nine or 11 pictures even if one more topic is added, as the CB3 offers “Halloween” at this stage of education. The most surprising amount is in CB2 with the total number of 24 pictures that carry most information load of the cultural content. To consider size of the visual input, the results show that there are eight small pictures and three big ones in CB1, 16 small pictures and eight big ones in CB2; six small pictures and three big ones in CB3.

As far as the core mode of language is concerned, the medial variant of speech includes phrases, stories, and song lyrics, which on average counted as five phrases (plus numbers 1–10, six colors, and three animals). This channel is widely used in the cultural sections with the average number of 26 and 31 phrases. A considerable number of 54 phrases is included in the third series of CB3. As it was mentioned above, the explanation refers to the additional topic incorporated in the course book. The medial variant of state writing, which represents the written words and sentences, is included in the number of eight phrases only in one series (CB1) out of the three investigated in this project. Other course books (CB2 and CB3) do not present phrases in the written forms. From the data in Table 2, it is apparent that the considerable amount of the verbal content is represented orally in the cultural sections,

following the principle of teaching the receptive skills before the productive ones in early language education. The core mode of sound, which is related to soundtracks of the verbal language (stories, songs, and drills for the pronunciation practice), is realized through two or three soundtracks per each cultural section in C2 and CB3. Interestingly, CB1 offers the extensive number of six soundtracks. Similarly, the core mode of music, which is related to the songs and chants performed and recorded, is realized through two songs in CB1 and CB3. Surprisingly, only CB2 does not include songs in the cultural sections.

Table 3 depicts multimodality of the selected English course books offered in the second year of primary education.

Table 3

Multimodality of the cultural content ELT course books for the 2nd grade

Course books 2nd grade	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech	State writing	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	New Year	7	13	8	3	1
CB1	Mother's Day	6	12	6	3	1
CB1	Totals	13	25	14	6	2
CB2	Halloween	9	11	6	1	1
CB2	Christmas	6	28	16	1	-
CB2	Totals	15	39	22	2	1
CB3	Christmas	3	19	6	1	1
CB3	Valentine's Day	3	15	6	1	1
CB3	Easter	6	14	4	1	1
CB3	Totals	12	48	16	3	3

It is apparent from this table that the core mode of image is realized through 12 up to 15 pictures on average in each cultural section. There is not a significant difference in their totals across the selected series. To consider size of the visual input, the results show that there are eight small pictures and five big ones in CB1; eight small pictures and seven big ones in CB2; eight small pictures and four big ones in CB3. Comparing the core mode of image offered in the first and second year of early language education, the visual content is integrated with the verbal content more precisely in the composition of pictures in grade 2 that include phrases or very short sentences.

There is a significant increase in the number of phrases and sentences in the core mode of language. The medial variant of speech is realized through phrases introduced orally, short sentences, stories, and song lyrics. This sensing channel is the most widely recognized in the course books and realized through 25 up to 48 speeches. A clear increase in the medial variant of state writing is also detected in Table 3. The written forms of phrases and sentences range between 14 and 22 per each cultural section in the second year of primary education. It is the striking result that indicates a gradual development from the auditory channel and semantic resource offered in early language communication towards the growth in written and visual resources.

The data associated with the core mode of sound in this table shows, similarly to the data in Table 2, the same number of soundtracks per each cultural content in the respective course books. These results can be compared with the details linked with the mode of music to reveal an intensification of the songs in the numbers of two or three ones provided in each section. There is only one difference in “Christmas” section in CB2, where a story is recorded in a soundtrack but there is not any song provided in the core mode of music.

Table 4 depicts multimodality of the selected English course books offered in the third year of primary education.

Table 4

Multimodality of the cultural content ELT course books for the 3rd grade

Course books 3rd grade	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech	State writing	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	Halloween	1	28	28	3	1
CB1	Valentine's Day	1	28	28	3	1
CB1	Totals	2	56	56	6	2
CB2	Halloween	4	26	26	2	–
CB2	Christmas	18	35	35	2	–
CB2	Easter	5	16	16	1	–
CB2	Totals	27	77	77	5	–
CB3	Christmas	1	24	24	3	1
CB3	Easter	1	16	16	3	1
CB3	Totals	2	40	40	6	2

As this table shows there is a decrease in the number of pictures related to the mode of image in the cultural content. Only CB2 maintains the result of 27, which is close to the one indicated in Table 2. Other course books seem to move from the visual content towards the verbal one. To consider size of the pictures, the results show that there are only two big pictures included both in CB1 and CB3 respectively. On the contrary, only small pictures in the number of 27 are included in CB2. Comparing the core mode of image offered in the first and second year of early language education, the visual content is more and more precisely integrated with the verbal content in the composition of images that include phrases, sentences, and dialogues.

A rapid increase is observed in the core mode of language through the verbal input provided in the cultural sections for the third year. The data collected for the median variant of speech recorded and the median variant of state writing are the same. The results confirm the move from the oral resources of communication towards the written ones. Finally, the core mode of sound, which is related to soundtracks of sentences, stories, and songs, is realized through either five or six soundtracks per each cultural section. The details indicate its steady role in the cultural content across grade 1, 2, and 3. To compare the details depicted in Table 2, the core mode of music in Table 4 is also realized through two songs in CB1 and CB3. Continually, CB2 does not include any songs in the cultural content.



Figure 1. Example of clarification in CB1 (*Our Discovery Island 1*, p. 71)

The results from the second part of the project related to the image-language relations provided the thought-provoking data on the inner construction of the visual and verbal input in the cultural sections. These are model units which consist of an image (simple or complex) and meaning related to it by content. The results related to the expansion and projection of meaning brought the most challenging details. Namely, the category of concurrence as the visual and verbal agreement was observed in four following subcategories: clarification, exposition, exemplification, and homo-spatiality. The results start with the clarification presented in Figure 1 when the image explains the song lyrics.

The image of Santa Claus coming to the town serves here as the precise framework for singing the song entitled “We wish You a Merry Christmas.” The mode of image initiates the meaning provided by the mode of music and sound.

The subcategory of exposition is defined as the equivalence of meanings that are represented in the different modes. It is also the re-expression of the meanings (of the image or the text) in the alternative mode which is shown in Figure 2.

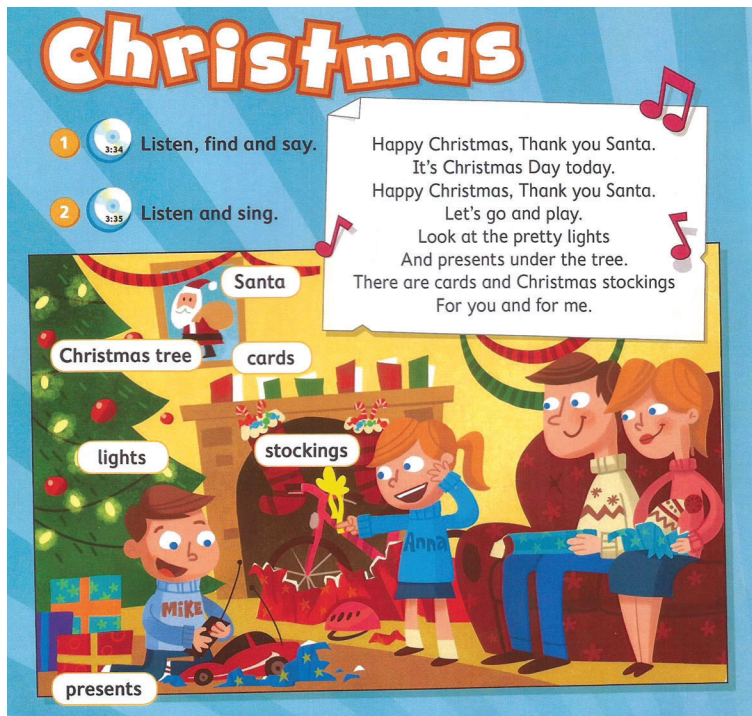


Figure 2. Example of exposition in CB1 (*Our Discovery Island 3*, p. 70)

There are two options here. The first one when a reader or listener concentrates on the image of Christmas, new words included in the state writing or reading the song lyrics. The second option when s/he focuses only on the mode of music singing the song “Happy Christmas.”

Correspondingly, the subcategory of exemplification offers two possibilities. The first one is defined here by the image which serves as an example from the text. The second possibility occurs when the text includes an example of what is mostly depicted in the image which is shown in Figure 3.

Valentine's Day

Sprawdź znaczenie słów i zwrotów w słowniczku na końcu książki.

lovely rose ring perfume card heart
inside I love you!

1 Listen, say and play.  C/4

2 Listen and read.  C/5



Tom: Tomorrow is February 14th. It's Valentine's Day. Daddy has got these lovely presents for Mummy.
Hannah: Look at this beautiful red rose. What's in the box?
Tom: I think it's some chocolates. Mummy likes chocolates.
Hannah: Or maybe it's a ring or some perfume.
Tom: No, I think it's chocolates. Has Mummy got a present for Daddy?
Hannah: Yes, she has got a card for him. It's a red heart. Inside the card it says 'I love you.'
Tom: That's nice.

Figure 3 . Example of exemplification in CB3 (*Our World 3*, p. 117).

The image of Valentine's Day is more general than the text, which discusses only some of the depicted symbols. A reader learns about a red rose, some chocolate, and perfume. There is a ring and a card mentioned in the text but they are not presented in the picture. On the other hand, a viewer perceives a candle, a plate, and fork plus extra red decorations.

The examples of homo-spatiality when two different modes co-occur in one spatial and standardized unit or entity have not been found in the cultural content of the selected course books, and are not described here. A similar situation has occurred with divergence as discrepancies have not been found in the visual input of the investigated cultural content.

The category of complementarity related to the image-language supplement which is described by augmentation (when the image extends the text or the text extends the image) and divergence. The example of the image which extends the text is shown in Figure 4 below.




Figure 4. Example of complementarity in CB1 (*Our Discovery Island 1*, p. 70).


The image of Halloween extends the meaning to the one realized by the chant and is provided here only in the music and sound mode. A viewer focuses initially on the picture that is supplemented by the chant lyrics. The example of augmentation when the text extends the image is shown in Figure 5.

Christmas


1 Listen, read and match with your fingers.










Hi! I'm Grace and I'm from England. For Christmas dinner we have **roast turkey**, **sausages** and **potatoes**. For dessert we have **Christmas pudding**.



I'm Zosia. In Poland we have borscht with dumplings and carp for Christmas. My mum makes a traditional Christmas **poppyseed cake**. It's delicious! I like **gingerbread biscuits**, too.



Hello! We're from Australia. Christmas here is in the summer. We like roast turkey for Christmas. Some people eat **seafood** on the beach! What do you eat at Christmas?

2 Read and answer.

In which country ...

1 children eat poppyseed cake?	4 children have Christmas pudding for dessert?
2 Christmas is in the summer?	5 people celebrate Christmas on the beach?
3 people eat seafood?	

Figure 5. Example of complementarity in CB2 (*Quest 3*, p. 69).

The topic of Christmas is described in three texts which are enriched with three small pictures on the left, depicting the respective text holistically. Still, seven symbols presented on the right are incorporated in the text in the state writing, serving as the visual and verbal content. This figure can also be the example of multiple image-language relations.

The category of projection is related to the image-language presentation (verbal and mental as perception and cognition). Namely, the relation involves a balance of verbal and visual content, quoting and reporting words or ideas in a form of cartoons as it is depicted in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Example of projection in CB2 (*Quest 3*, p. 69).

Young learners become here the viewers, listeners, and readers who are to follow all multimodal aspects simultaneously. It is another example of multiple image-language relations depicting multimodality of cultural content in ELT materials.

Conclusions

Multimodality of the cultural content in English course books for YL has been a new area of investigation. As the results show, ELT materials designed for early education include a selection of the cultural topics mainly limited to festivals and celebrations. They are presented in English course books with diverse manifestation and representation. Each section of the cultural content includes the core modes of image, language, sound, and music in different degree. To start with the core mode of image and sound which form and deliver the cultural details in the first years, to continue with more balanced use of all core modes in the third grade. All the resources in their iconographic and textual form spread meaning and values, stressing the connection between the target language learning and culture learning (both home and Anglo-Saxon one). A sensible approach is also advocated in terms of implementing and developing various semantic resource and modes included in the cultural sections. The cultural content is experienced by YL as the readers and listeners, who still develop perception, recognition, and comprehension at this stage of education. They are very sensitive towards both visual and verbal input, which leads to the intrinsic role of multimodality in their background.

The findings indicate challenges that can be faced in the evaluation of image-language relations. It is linked with the expansion and projection of the verbal and visual messages as well as possibilities applied in the construction of their meaning. The amount, intensity, and character of the visual content changes in English course books with regards to the age of learners. Its role seems to decrease with the years of learning and abdicate in favor of the verbal and written messages. The role and amount of the verbal content provided in the cultural sections increase gradually in the subsequent series of course books. However, the visual impact stimulates visual learning and teaching to develop multiliteracies among learners. Consequently, it leads to the increasing number of multimodal materials that can be designed in many possible ways.

The selected course books were not evaluated in terms of the authors and their nationality, which may be another factor for further materials evaluation. It may have implications for the design of teaching materials produced for the local or international market. It would be interesting for MDA to examine other core modes (sound and music) and medial variants such as color in ELT materials for YL. Recommendations for further work are also linked with the evaluation of the image-language relations in terms of children's perception and reception as little or no attention is paid to the use of ELT materials by YL. It would be interesting to assess the image-language impact on successful early English acquisition in multicultural background. Another recommenda-

tion refers to pre-service and in-service teacher education for the exploitation of multimodal ELT materials and visual teaching in Polish context.

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Maria Stec

Multimodalität der Kulturinhalte im didaktischen Material der englischen Sprache für Kinder

Zusammenfassung

Die Kulturinhalte treten im didaktischen Material auf, um dessen Sprachinhalte zu bereichern. Der vorliegende Beitrag schildert didaktisches Material der englischen Sprache als Kulturartefakte, indem er multimediale Analyse des Diskurses verwendet. Er bezweckt, die wichtigsten Aspekte der Multimodalität in den, den integralen Bestandteil der Englischlehrbücher für Kinder im Frühschulalter bildenden Kulturinhalten festzulegen. Die Verfasserin versucht folgende Fragen zu beantworten: was für Modalität lassen die in den Sprachlehrbüchern für Kleinkinder enthaltenen Kulturinhalte erkennen und wie sehen die visuell-verbalen Beziehungen im Aufbau der Kulturinhalte aus. Das zur Analyse verwendete Material stammte aus neun Lehrbüchern für Englischunterricht, die heutzutage in polnischen Elementarschulen gebraucht werden. Die Beurteilung umfasste quantitative und qualitative Analyse. In den Forschungen wurden ausgewählte universale Kriterien für Inhalte, Multimodalität und Intermodalität angewandt. Die Verfasserin hofft darauf, dass ihre Ergebnisse den Prozess der multimedialen Struktur der didaktischen Lehrmittel für Englischunterricht verbessern und den Bedarf an weiterer Entwicklung der Fähigkeit, die Bilder in multikultureller Bildung und im Frühschulbildungsstadium zu deuten, begründen werden.